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## ON LAND AND SEA OR THE PERILS OF A KIDNAPPED BOY. BY BRACEBRIDGE HEMYNG



THE COLONEL FIRED HIS REVOLVER FULL AT THE MADDENED BRUTE, WHILE HARRY LEAPED TO THE GROUND WITH HIS MOTHER.



# On Land and Sea;

OR,

## The Perils of a Kidnapped Boy.

BY BRACEBRIDGE HEMYNG.

## CHAPTER I.

BEAUTIFUL NAPLES.

A. D. A—, 1883.

Our scene opens in Naples, probably the most beautiful city in the world; city of the rich, and of Masanillo and his macaroni-eating lazzaroni; queen of the deep blue sea, and the lava-heaving Vesuvius, with buried in scoria Pompeii close by, like the death's head at a banquet, as a warning to her palatial streets and vine-clad hills.

But what Neapolitan cares for the standing terror of the fiery mountain? Least of all, did the young, handsome, and wealthy Carlo Malvini, Count di Capri, owner of the Palazzo Bomba. He lived for enjoyment, like a butterfly. Sufficient for the day was the evil thereof, and he gave little heed to the morrow.

In the smart society set two American ladies attracted great attention. They were Mrs. Winthrop and her daughter, Mamie, a lovely brunette, seventeen years of age, versatile and accomplished. Their dresses and diamonds were immense.

Mrs. Winthrop was a handsome widow. Her husband had been a New York merchant. He died a millionaire.

The Count di Capri had met Mamie on several occasions, and was deeply enamored of her. He had been waiting for some time to get an opportunity to propose for her hand.

Mrs. Winthrop, one week in May, had issued cards for a reception at the Hotel Emmanuel, where she resided with her daughter. The Count was on her visiting list; consequently he received an invitation. Here was the chance he had been looking for, and he resolved not to neglect it.

The Count bought a diamond bracelet, worth five thousand dollars, and sent it to Miss Winthrop's hotel as a present with his card. This was his advance agent. He also sent her a costly bouquet. Things like this tell their tale.

In the afternoon he drove out. His pair of horses were the finest in Naples. He passed Mrs. Winthrop and her daughter; they smiled upon him, which he took for an augury of success.

A second time the carriages met and passed. This time he was surprised to see a distinguished young gentleman seated opposite the ladies. They had taken him up. The meeting was either accidental or by appointment—which? It was impossible to decide. At all events, the gentleman was on terms of intimacy with the family.

The demon of jealousy was instantly aroused in the mind of di Capri. Who was this stranger?

The fashionable drive was not lengthy. Carriages were constantly meeting. A third time the Count and the Winthrops were in contact. There was a block in the road. Di Capri reined in alongside. It was impossible to avoid conversation.

"I hope we shall have the pleasure of your society this evening, Count," said Mrs. Winthrop, after the usual greetings. "Mme. Nevada, the famous opera singer, is engaged. You are coming? So glad. Allow me to introduce to you Captain Charles Vernon of the English Grenadier Guards, whom we knew in London last year."

The men bowed to one another stiffly, but before any more could be said the block broke, and the carriages were obliged to move on.

Instinctively, Vernon and di Capri knew they were rivals. The latter's hot Italian blood boiled. Was he to be foiled by an Englishman?

Driving home he sent the groom with his equipage to the stable and walked by the sea. The bay was quite calm. No sailing yachts were out, but steam launches fluttered about like fire-flies.

From the sea he went to the Club of All Nations, which was noted for its high play. Fortunes had been lost there in a night at baccarat. Di Capri himself had often been a heavy loser. In the smoking room he drank a liberal quantity of brandy. Presently entered Colonel Castiglione, an intimate friend of di Capri's. He was a gossip, a general favorite, going everywhere, and knowing every one; one who was worth knowing. He was the very man the Count wanted in the crisis that had arisen. He could not apply to any man better calculated to give him the information he wished for.

"Caro Carlo!" exclaimed Colonel Castiglione. "You seem somewhat distraught. If there is trouble with a man, find the woman. These creatures make our heaven and—our hell!"

"You know the American people—the Winthrops?"

"Perfectly well. I am a friend of the house. Very charming is Senorita Mamie. Ye gods! She would inflame any man's heart. But, again, who is the man? In your case there must be a man."

"An Englishman—Captain Charles Vernon. Young, pink and white face, hair parted in the middle, curled mustache, wears stays, I should think."

"You are prejudiced," said the colonel. "He is an excellent fellow, who has been engaged to Miss Winthrop for some months. They are to be married shortly. I had an idea that every one in our set knew that. They leave here directly. Have your eyes been shut and your ears closed?"

Count di Capri was dumfounded at this intelligence. It was a death-blow to him; the knell of doom had sounded. Disguising his feelings, he changed the subject, pretending to be unconcerned. His manner became flamboyant. He drank, smoked, talked, and dined at the club.

At 8 o'clock he went home and dressed. An hour later he was at the hotel. The reception room was crowded. The operatic diva was singing, and the guests were talking loudly as if to drown her voice. Mrs. Winthrop received very well.

Di Capri walked up to Mamie, who was the centre of a select coterie and the cynosure of all eyes. She wore his bracelet and the flowers he had sent her! This was encouraging, but alas! What had Colonel Castiglione told him? How lovely she looked! His heart was aflame, his brain burned.

She received him kindly, and after a brief conversation he offered his arm for a promenade, and they strolled into the conservatory, which was filled with palms and flowers and elegantly lighted with colored lamps.

Stopping near a fern-covered bank, di Capri, begging pardon for his abruptness, told the story of his love. If rejected, he said, it might turn to hate. He was half mad. At first he fawned and cajoled; then he threatened. It is doubtful if he knew what he did.

Gently, in a ladylike way, Miss Win-

throp told him that she could not wed him because she loved another. Had they met earlier it might have been different. Always would she regard him as a friend and be proud of his friendship.

He bore it bravely, but at the same time he vowed to have the bitterest revenge. They left the garden and returned to the reception room. Her attention was at once arrested by a dozen people. With a sweet smile, which meant nothing, she disengaged her arm from that of the Count, and was talking to first one, then to others, in four languages. Di Capri knew everybody; yet he was not in a sociable mood. He wandered about, looking for Captain Vernon. He was not there. It was late, but he had not yet arrived. At length the Count walked from the hotel and was driven rapidly to the club.

"If I could only meet that fellow!" he muttered.

There was a depth of meaning in those words. They portended evil to Charley Vernon and Mamie Winthrop!

It was midnight when he entered the Club of All Nations, and he proceeded at once to the card room, where about fifteen well-known gentlemen were assembled playing the fascinating but often ruinous game of baccarat. Colonel Castiglione was the banker. The play was high. Di Capri felt the mania for gambling. He was utterly reckless. What became of him he did not care.

Presently he went to the table. Colonel Castiglione saw him and asked him to take the bank. With a nod he accepted the offer. Silently, mechanically, he set to work. Luck was against him. He lost coup after coup, but he would not have the sense to give in. As he lost, he gave checks. They were accepted, because it was known that they would be honored the next morning and duly cashed at his bank.

At 5 o'clock he was at the end of his tether and another hour saw him a bankrupt man. Throwing down the cards he made room for somebody else and paced the room with his hands in his pockets. He was ruined. It was nearly dawn and there was a sound of laughter and revelry in the corridor. Two young men entered, their faces flushed as if by wine. One was Captain Vernon! When di Capri saw him he hissed like a snake and gnashed his teeth vengefully; his eyes scintillated like those of a cobra.

"My man!" he said to himself, clenching his fists with a demoniac glare in his eye.

Captain Vernon after leaving Mr. Winthrop's had come to the club with the intention of gambling. He took a seat at the table and commenced to plunge. Appetite grows by what it feeds on. The old stagers who had won from the Count hoped to win more from the Englishman, so the band played on.

But they were disappointed. Vernon carried everything before him! He was an enormous winner in a couple of hours. Most of the Count's checks passed to his hands.

Di Capri looked on and fumed. It was too much. One by one the gamblers quitted the table and went home. Vernon had made a fortune. At last only Colonel Castiglione was left, and he threw up the game. Two waiters were present.

Suddenly di Capri rushed forward and cried: "My money, you thief! All mine!"

"My good fellow," replied Vernon, "what do you mean? I won it fairly."

"You lie in your teeth! No nonsense! Sapristi! I will have your life's blood!"



Charley Vernon rose. His only response was to strike di Capri under the right ear and knock him senseless on the floor.

"The crazy fool," he muttered, gathering up his winnings. "No man shall call me a liar."

He quitted the room. Nobody attempted to stop him. Such scenes, unhappily, were of frequent occurrence. Colonel Castiglione was busy attending to his friend, but it was no concern of his.

Some time elapsed before di Capri recovered. There were bedrooms in the club. He was taken to one and a doctor sent for. The advice of the latter was rest for a few days.

Three days elapsed. No one seemed to take much interest in di Capri, though he had many professed friends.

Castiglione visited him daily, though it was known that he was ruined. The brokers who were in the Palazzo Bomba reported no money in the bank, no worldly goods. What was to become of him?

On the fifth day di Capri was able to sit up and talk. "What about that infernal Englishman?" he asked Castiglione, who had dropped in.

"He was married yesterday to Miss Winthrop," was the reply, "and afterward took train for Genoa with his bride and mother-in-law. From there they will steam to New York."

"By heaven! I will follow them! Maladitto! I curse them both!" replied the Count.

"You have no money."

"St. Joseph, the guardian of the penniless, will help me! I will find enough for that."

"You will be a tramp, then. Your friends might help you here."

"I have no friends. I will be a sleuth to hunt them down. Revenge is all I want, and by the living God, I will have it if I starve, if I suffer, if I wait years! What is life to me? Revenge! I'll have it!"

Carlo Malvini, Count di Capri, meant what he said, and in future had but one purpose in life.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE ITALIAN'S SON.

A. D. 1893.

It is far from Naples to New York City, the commercial centre of the Empire State of America, but we are there after a lapse of ten years, during which period some events of interest have taken place. Captain Vernon took his young bride, under his mother-in-law's auspices, to New York and bought a house on Murray Hill, near Fifth Avenue. Here they lived very happily. A child was born. It was a boy, as handsome as his father, and when he was able to toddle about he was beloved by every one. How they dressed him! What a fuss they made over him! Some envious folks said it was astonishingly absurd; but, after all, it was human nature. What is a woman worth if she cannot love a baby? And the man must follow suit.

The child of whom they were so fond and proud, who was to be wealthy, and, they hoped, famous, was one day missing.

This was the story of the nurse who had charge of young Charles Vernon:

"It was near 12 o'clock. I wheeled Master Vernon in his carriage from Lexington Avenue, along Eighty-fifth Street, past Park and Madison to Central Park. We had not been long inside the Park when a man appeared. He threw something from a bag into my eyes. For a few minutes I could not see. When I recovered my sight the wagon was empty and the baby gone."

This was the sworn statement. Rewards were offered and the smartest detectives employed, but no trace of the child could be discovered.

Ten years elapsed. The mystery remained unsolved. Mr. and Mrs. Vernon traveled around the world. Their union was not blessed by any further offspring. Mrs. Vernon's heart was sad. There was a void that could not be filled. She was affectionate to her husband. He had nothing to complain of except a lack of sympathy, a weariness, and a far-away look in the eyes instead of a loving one. They settled in New York and went into society. Captain Vernon drove and ran horses at the races. He was a great club man, and his wife was left much alone with her mother and friends. The loss of the child had broken their lives.

Sometimes they thought of Carlo Malvini, Count di Capri, and his threat, which had been repeated to them. Was he at the bottom of the mystery? It was impossible to tell, for they knew absolutely nothing about him. He had disappeared from Naples a penniless and ruined man.

There was not a more palatial residence in the City of New York than that occupied by the Vernons. Everything that money could buy and taste suggest was to be seen. Their friends thought they were happy, but the gaiety was merely veneer, something artificial. They wanted their lost child.

Carlo Malvini, Count di Capri, was fully revenged up to date as he had sworn he would be!

We have been taking a survey of Captain Vernon's surroundings up town. Let us travel down to Crosby Street, in which region Italians are fond of congregating. Tenement houses there are full of them.

There was a basement or dive in the vicinity of Crosby Street, divided into four rooms and a kitchen. This was rented by Giacomo, who was the proud possessor of an organ. He had a hard-working wife, Anita, and a boy, Paulo, who used to go out in the streets with bare feet, sell boot laces, matches, anything, and beg, saying "Porro Italiano" with a practiced whine. Giacomo took in lodgers. His organ was a source of income, but he was greedy. Giacomo saved.

The lodgers were a man who called himself Carlo and kept a fruit stand up town on Third Avenue. He had with him a boy of ten years, who served as his assistant and called him father.

To this boy he behaved very cruelly. He beat him constantly, swore at him, and was dreadfully harsh. This boy Marco was a martyr; every one pitied him, but no one interfered. Carlo had a fearful temper and carried a knife.

Another lodger was a stout, dark man from Calabria named Corso. He played the piccolo and had a tame monkey. This was the colony. They did well, but they lived high, drank, and spent money.

It was the month of January. Such a severe Winter had not been known for years. Snow was falling, wind was blowing, and the poor Italians who wanted to sell fruit, grind an organ, or play the piccolo with a shivering monkey as an additional attraction had a hard time of it. But in the kitchen—in the underground, heated, malodorous den, it was pleasant to those expatriated Italians. They had partaken of supper and were smoking, while bottles of whisky and aquadiente stood on the table. The boys Marco and Paulo played "craps" in a corner.

We will glance at the people in the

room. Paulo was an insignificant mite of a thoroughbred mendicant, like his mother, Anita; undersized and attenuated, dark hair, olive skin; so was Giacomo, the "organist"; so Corso, the flute and monkey fakir. Carlo the fruit vendor, was more distinguished, perhaps he had seen better times. Occasionally, when under the influence of liquor, he boasted that he had noble blood in his veins. Marco was different from all the others. He was quite white when he was washed, which was not often, and he did not look the least bit like an Italian; he spoke English well; so did Carlo, the fruit vendor. Giacomo and Corso spoke broken English, yet made themselves understood.

Carlo was in bad temper. There was a bear market in fruit. Nobody wanted dates, and figs were at a discount, while half-frozen oranges were a drug.

He saw Marco take some bananas from his pocket and share them with Paulo. In a moment he was on his feet. He gave the boy a box on the ears, which sent him rolling half stunned into a corner.

"What you wanta to hit the boya for?" asked Giacomo, looking across the table at Carlo.

"He is my boy. Why do you interfere?" was the reply. "If you don't keep still you will be sorry for it."

"Me no holda my tonga. Your childa! Ha! Ha! Where you get it from? Where your wifa, hey? If you wanta talka, you have it."

Carlo drew a knife from beneath his vest. Giacomo did the same, and shrank into a corner, while Corso was quite neutral.

"If he is not my child, you do not know where he came from, or who he belongs to," cried Carlo. "Keep your remarks to yourself; if not I will make you."

"You steala that childa!"

"Liar! He is mine."

The two men edged round the table and met, knife in hand.

Marco, the boy about whom the dispute was, crept to the door, which was open. He ran out through the corridor, up the steps, and into the snow-clad street. Free, but without a home, and determined never to return to that miserable den.

Meantime the struggle between the two Italians became fiercer and fiercer.

"Me killa you!" cried Giacomo, making a thrust at his opponent in tierce.

Carlo parried it and lunged in carte. They were scientific in fence, these Italians, and understood the art of fencing as well as a Frenchman. The blow delivered by Carlo struck Giacomo in the arm, who, quick as a flash, lunged his weapon forward and buried it deep in his antagonist's breast.

Carlo fell down, bleeding profusely.

"You have done for me," he said in a low tone. "I don't blame you, nor am I sorry to leave this miserable existence."

"It was not my faulta!" replied Giacomo, alarmed at what he had done.

"I forgive you. Let me die here. You must fly or they will put you in the chair. You do not want to be electrocuted. Where is the boy?"

"He has gone. Nowhere to be seena now."

Giacomo looked around the room. Anita had fainted in a chair. The imperturbable Corso was smoking and nursing the monkey.

"If he comes back take care of him, but do not try to make him respectable. Send him out to thrive. Make a scamp of him as I have tried to do."



"You are raving. Try a glass of brandy."

Giacomo gave him some. A fit of coughing came on. It made the hemorrhage worse than before and also affected his head, which became light.

"I shall die," he muttered, "you have given me my death blow. They will put you in prison, I suppose; in that case you cannot care for and tutor the child. How the time flies. He is ten this year."

"Where you getta the childa?" inquired Giacomo. "I always think some mystery about thata. Cospetto! You knowa something."

"He is the son and heir of the Vernons. I stole him out of revenge. I brought the brat up in a gutter; let him die in one."

"Who are youa?"

"Carlo Malvini, Count di Capri. Before I sold fruit I had that organ Corso now has. I played in front of the house where the Vernons lived. When the woman came out with the baby I followed her to the Park. Then I stole the child. Well do I remember the air I played on the organ. Mamie was at the window, but she didn't know me. It was 'The Mother Sought Her Long-Lost Boy and Sought for Years in Vain, but, Oh! There Came a Happy Time When Those Two Met Again.'"

A rush of blood nearly choked him, stopping all further utterance.

Corso had been listening attentively. The stolen boy, heir of the Vernons?

"I will make money out of this," he muttered "find the boy heir of the Vernons. Then find the mother. I'm on the level."

At this moment two police officers entered the room. A prying neighbor had seen what was going on and had summoned them.

An ambulance was sent for Carlo Malvini, but he died before he got to the hospital. This was the end of the Count di Capri, once famous in Europe.

Giacomo was arrested. Corso gave evidence against him, and he was committed to the Tombs, and afterward received a long sentence for homicide.

Anita and her boy Paulo made the best of it. Paulo was engaged by Corso to mind the monkey. Corso discarded the piccolo and took on the organ.

They went all over the city, but could discover no trace of Marco—stolen child, heir of the rich Vernons.

What was he? What had become of him?

### CHAPTER III.

#### A BOY OF NEW YORK.

When the stolen boy called Marco, the heir of the Vernons, brought up in a low Italian lodging house, went out into the snow-covered street on that cold, frosty night, he did not know where to go.

He had not a friend in the world. All he wanted was to get away from the Italians' den.

Feeling tired, cold, and miserable, he sat down on a doorstep in Forsyth Street. Sad to state, he was so low spirited and downcast that he did not care what became of him.

After a while a boy came toward him. He had some newspapers under his arm and was evidently going home. A fine, handsome boy of fourteen.

"Cheese it," he whispered, "a cop's coming. Look alive, cully. They don't allow sitting on stoops at this time of night. Look out for yourself."

"I have nowhere to go," replied Carlo. "Will you take me with you?"

"That's what I call cool. Mind you don't get pinched and run in. What have you done, sonny?"

"Nothing. It isn't my fault."

"That's what we all say when we get into trouble. Speak out. Don't lie low. I'm a smart boy; they call me the 'Duke,' because I put on style and can get on quicker than any other young rooster in this city. Who are you?"

"I don't know, but I've been brought up with Italians, and have had to run about with an organ. My name is Marco."

"Pshaw! I-talians ain't no good. I don't wonder you had to skip. What was it for?"

"They were cutting one another, and I thought it would be my turn next."

"That's bad. Would you like to come with me, Marco. I could teach you how to make a stamp?"

"I should be so glad."

"It's a go," said the Duke. "You won't be the first lame dog I have helped and put on his legs."

"How kind of you."

"Not at all. I'm too smart, greeny, to do anything for nothing. I'll get it all back from you before long. Jump up. We must skip."

The Duke took him by the hand, helped him up, and they walked away together. They had not far to walk. The Duke took his new-found friend down a basement. In the kitchen was seated an elderly Jew, grizzled and lantern-jawed, but having the eyes of a lynx. The house belonged to him, and was always filled with lodgers. He was unmarried and a miser. People who knew him said that he was a large owner of real estate. There were two bedrooms in the basement adjoining the kitchen, one for himself and the other for his lodgers. The Duke was one and the second was a thin-visaged lad nearly sixteen, whose name was Marly, commonly called the Commodore. The Jew, was Ikey Mo. He bought stolen property. The Duke and the Commodore were in the habit of appropriating other people's property when they had a chance. In fact, they were pickpockets.

Carlo had wandered into a den of thieves. This he had to find out. At present all was new to him.

"A friend of mine," exclaimed the Duke; "he will sleep with Marly and me."

"Vat does he know?" asked Ikey Mo.

"Nothin' jes now, but he's willin' to learn, I guess. He's got the makin' of a bunko man in him."

"If you will answer for him, I guess it is all right. We don't want to back wrong 'uns."

"Nit. He's on the level."

"Vell, I take your vort for it, mein tear poy. It is all the petter if it vas so. Ve can do mit him."

Carlo was gratified to think that he had found a shelter, and did not stop to think what sort of a place he had got into. The Duke had not told him what his avocation was. He had never been taught to thief, and had his ideas of right and wrong, though his education was of the most meagre description. He could read and write and sum a little, but not much of that.

The three boys had supper together. It consisted of the commonest bread and hard cheese. Ikey Mo went out. He was in the habit of visiting a neighboring saloon. Here he met several men to whom he advanced small loans of money at exorbitant interest.

When he was gone, the Duke winked

his eye, went to a cupboard, and brought out a bag he had hidden away. From it he produced some delicacies, such as canned salmon, lobster, corned beef, and rolls. They were soon enjoying it all.

"Where you'se get that?" asked the Commodore.

"On de east side. I didn't ask de grocer de price, for he had his back turned. Our old sheeny boss don't feed us too well. Consider that what we do for him might land us on de island. Have a cigarette? I'se got a drop of de ole stuff in de bag."

He produced a packet of caporal and a small bottle of whisky. The two boys smoked and drank, but Marco refused to join them.

"You'se got to learn something," laughed the Duke. "I am goin' ter take yer up to der Tenderloin district termor-rer and you must know de ropes or yer won't be able ter swipe a lady's purse when she's peeping inter a shop winder."

The talk was almost incomprehensible to Carlo, but the truth began to dawn upon him. He had met with thieves. They were worse than the Italians. His soul revolted, for his gentlemanly instinct warned him that he had strayed into a bad crowd. He kept his ears open, and his tongue quiet. If the boys went about with a few newspapers or boot laces to sell, it was only a blind. After supper they played cards until they were tired, when they retired to rest.

It was 2 o'clock before Ikey Mo left his boon companions, staggered into his basement, and went to bed.

Breakfast was ready early in the morning. Marly went out, coming back with some eggs, bacon, and a packet of cocoa.

"I'm going over to Brooklyn," remarked Marly.

"Marco and I will go up town," said the Duke. "Commodore can work his racket; we will do ours. I'll teach the greenhorn how to swipe a purse."

Marco's suspicions were aroused by these words.

When he and the Duke reached the corner of Houston Street and Broadway, Marco made a rush for liberty, but his companion seized him by the arm.

"What's yer game?" he cried. "Yer don't play yer tricks low down on me."

"I won't be a thief!" replied Marco.

"You young fraud, are you going back on me. I'll knife you!"

"Lemme go. I ain't hurting you."

"Der's too much of de monkey about you. I ain't goin' to part like dis. You'se got ter come along or I'll push you under de cable car, sure."

Marco struggled. He wrenched his arm away and darted across the broad thoroughfare.

A rush of vehicles intervened to prevent the Duke from following, and the boy was lost to sight.

He did not stop until he reached Washington Square, where he sat down and rested. He was adrift again.

The sound of an organ in South Fifth Avenue caught his ear.

Surely he knew the tune it was grinding forth. He walked toward it.

In front of a stately mansion of the old style was Corso, playing the old air, "The Mother Sought Her Long-Lost Boy." The monkey was perched on the organ, a gray-haired, sad-visaged lady was looking out of an open window listening.

Paulo was sick with the fever and could not come out with the monkey. The latter knew Marco directly he saw him, and making two or three leaps and bounds jumped upon his shoulder and began to pat his ear.



"Poor little man," said Marco, "knows me."

Corso, missing his ape, turned quickly and saw Marco.

"Hi! Come here. Venit, amico mio! Aa! He is off, Santa Maria, he taka the monka with him!" Corso exclaimed.

It was useless to attempt to follow unless he abandoned his organ.

"Diavolo! That was bada lucka," he continued.

The lady seated at the window beckoned to him and he went nearer the basement railing.

Taking off his cap, he held it out for the nickel he expected to receive.

To his intense surprise, the lady presented him with a bright silver dollar.

"Mucha gracias, lady," he said. "Porro Italiano thanka you."

"How long have you had that organ, my man? I ask for a special reason. Some years ago a man played the air you have just finished, and I have every reason to believe that he stole my child."

Corso's heart gave a big leap.

"Whata your nama?" he asked.

"Vernon," was the reply.

Through the organ he had found the mother of Marco, and the lad, strange to say, had only a minute before been within his grasp.

"What you paya for me to finda your boya?" asked Corso.

"Five thousand dollars."

"How you knowa him."

"By a peculiar mark on his left foot," replied Mrs. Vernon.

"Me finda. Me finda," shouted Corso, delighted. "A fortune fora me at lasta."

Marco and the monkey had vanished in the square, and in that direction the Italian organ grinder followed.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### FORTUNE SMILES ON THE BOY OF NEW YORK.

Marco, with the monkey on his shoulder, swiftly ran away from the itinerant musician Corso. He knew the streets of the great city very well, and was used to dodging in and out. The monkey was perfectly at ease with him, because he had always been kind to the animal.

As he strolled up town along Sixth Avenue, ladies with children stopped to look at the monkey. Marco held out his cap, muttering, "Porro Italiano. Verra pcora, lady. Giva penna for buya breada," and he was given money. A nickel he expended for peanuts, which Jocko ate greedily, chattering his thanks.

At Thirty-fourth Street and Herald Square Marco stopped, and, feeling in his pocket, counted his money. He reckoned that he was a capitalist to the extent of seventy-five cents, and he entered a near-by restaurant to get a cup of coffee.

Here, to his alarm, he was confronted by the Duke, who was eating a lunch.

This young man caught him by the arm and exclaimed, with a grin: "Oh, ain't this jis' boss. I didn't think I'd have the pleasure of meeting you so soon. Ye'r quite a stranger. It was wrong of you ter give me the slip, becoss I loves yer as a brother."

"Hate me like poison, you mean," replied the boy. "You only pretend to be my friend."

"I see you are with your Italian pals again. The Dagos have sent you out with a monkey," continued the Duke. "Very kind of them, sure. Come along. We'll improve the hour, like the little busy bee."

"How? In what way?" asked Marco.

"You monkey it up Broadway. Dance

and sing a bit. While you're attracting a crowd I'll swipe the ladies' purses."

"And leave me to be arrested. No, thank you."

"What, you ungrateful cur! You refuse me," cried the Duke. "Didn't I pick you up out of the gutter and give yer a home? Oh! I won't do a thing to you," he added, as he raised his fist to strike Marco.

The monkey saw the movement and flew at the Duke, clawing and biting him until he was covered with blood.

Marco ran to Third Avenue, and, taking a car, went to Harlem. He crossed the river and overtook a funeral carriage, preceded by a hearse. This contained a small casket. In the coach was a lady. He concluded that she was going to a child's funeral. He had an instinct to follow it; he did so, going after the carriage at a sharp pace.

The sky became overcast; it was dull and cloudy. A drizzling rain began to fall. The cemetery was reached. The hearse and the carriage slowed up and entered the gates. A little grave had been dug near the chapel. The lady alighted. It seemed odd that she should be alone. Tears were flowing from her eyes. The coffin was put in the grave. ashes to ashes, dust to dust. On the plate of the casket Marco read, "Hans Vandeverger, age 10."

Why, he knew not, Marco began to cry. He didn't know the dead boy, nor had he ever seen the lady before. Yet all his sympathy went out to her.

The grave was filled up. The diggers went away. The lady and Marco were alone. The hearse had departed. In the roadway stood the waiting coach.

Drizzle, drizzle the thin rain came down. A white mist arose. The lady clasped her hands and bowed her head.

She was praying.

When she looked up she noticed Marco. He was a bright, intelligent, handsome boy.

"How like my lost treasure," she muttered, advancing to Marco. "Who are you, little fellow, and what brings you here?"

"Mine is a long story, ma'am," answered Marco, "but I will tell it to you if you wish."

"Are you alone in the world—a waif—a stray?"

"I have none to care for and nobody to care for me. Oh! lady, if you can help me, do so. I was thinking I should like to be in that newly filled grave."

The lady was a widow. Mrs. Vandeverger, rich and handsome. Her husband had been a merchant in the West India trade when he died. All her affection was centred on her child, Hans, who died suddenly of pneumonia.

It happened, singularly enough, that Marco bore a strong resemblance to her child, who had just been laid to rest. She asked him to come into the coach, tell her his story, and have tea with her at her house in West Fifty-ninth Street. This he was only too glad to do.

They entered the carriage, and were driven from the cemetery to the fashionable part of the city.

In a simple, pathetic way Marco narrated his life tale, as far as he knew it. He only remembered being brought up in a Crosby Street dive by Italians, though there was a shadowy remembrance of a sunny land and the touch of a mother's hand.

"You shall never go back to those bad people, if you will let me adopt you as my own," said Mrs. Vandeverger. "I want to be a mother to you. All the comforts that wealth can supply shall be

yours. Will you fill the place of my dead boy?"

"Do you really mean it, madam?" inquired Marco.

He was incredulous at this good fortune.

"As God hears me, I do," Mrs. Vandeverger replied.

Marco cuddled up close to her and kissed her hand. She pressed him to her bosom and repeatedly kissed him. It was a bargain. He was adopted. She had found a son and he a mother.

When they reached her house she told the servants that he was to take the place of her son. He was treated with the utmost civility and greatest consideration.

A private tutor was engaged for him. He was dressed elegantly and taken out driving every day.

A strong affection sprang up between them.

In this way a month elapsed.

One afternoon Mrs. Vandeverger said: "Marco, I want you to look your best to-day. My dearest friend, Mrs. Vernon, is coming to tea."

"Yes, mamma," answered Marco. "I will try to be all you wish me."

"You are a little gentleman now, you know; do not talk of your antecedents."

"I was told to keep that a secret, and I will."

It was, indeed, singular. Mrs. Vandeverger's particular friend was Mrs. Vernon, and Mrs. Vernon was Marco's mother, who was seeking her lost child.

Mother and son were going to meet face to face that day, and yet neither knew the other or was likely to do so under existing circumstances.

Mrs. Vernon arrived. She was pale, thin, statuesque, but still beautiful.

After greeting her hostess, she was shown the adopted child. An electric thrill ran through her slender form. Why she knew not.

The boy had a strange fascination for her. When she heard how he was found she was greatly interested and felt constrained to tell Mrs. Vandeverger how she had lost a child and her heart had been broken ever since.

Gradually she began to ask questions. Mrs. Vandeverger relaxed her rule of silence and allowed him to answer.

"His is a wonderful story," she remarked. "In fact, quite romantic and worth listening to. I told him to keep it a secret, but I do not mind you hearing it, my dear."

Mrs. Vernon took the boy on her knee, and he told her all about himself that he could remember. As he went on there was a suspicion in her mind that he was her long-lost child.

His connection with the Italians tended to corroborate her fancy. There was one proof.

The birthmark, to which we have previously alluded. Mrs. Vernon told Mrs. Vandeverger what she imagined, and begged plaintively to be allowed to examine young Marco, which was freely accorded.

The mark was there!

She clasped him in her arms, crying hysterically: "My child! My child! My long-lost darling. Oh, God! how good of Thee. My prayers are answered at last."

Mrs. Vandeverger was deeply grieved to part with her adopted pet, but there was no help for it.

The mother had found her child at last.

She took him home with her, and a new life began for her husband and herself.



## CHAPTER V.

## THE NEXT LINK IN THE VENDETTA.

Carlo Malvini, who had come to such a miserable death at the hands of Giacomo in a low part of New York, had four brothers.

By chance one of them, named Iago, saw an account of his murder in an Italian paper, which had translated it from an American.

He was living in Rome. At once he summoned the other three brothers. They met. The story of the boy Marco and his restoration to the Vernons was told in the paper.

The three brothers, by name Giuseppe, Faroni, and Adrain, listened to their elder relation, now Count di Capri.

It was decided that he should go to America and carry on the vendetta.

If he failed to obtain revenge and came to an untimely end, Giuseppe swore to take up the vendetta, and after him Faroni and Adrain, if necessary.

Thus is a vendetta carried out through a whole family, and sometimes through generations. Giacomo was in prison. It was not him they intended to injure, but Mr. and Mrs. Vernon and their son Henry, formerly known as Marco.

When Iago Malvini, Count di Capri, arrived in New York to carry out his part of the vendetta, he stayed at the Plaza Hotel, near the park.

His object was to find out all he could about Captain and Mrs. Vernon and their newly recovered boy, Harry.

This was not a difficult thing to do. Their name was in the directory, and they moved in the best society.

To thoroughly hide his deadly intent he changed his name to Colonel Monico.

In order to avoid personal trouble, he engaged a clever American as his guide and agent.

This man's name was Tony Fish. Although only thirty years of age, he had traveled all over Europe as a courier, and spoke seven different languages.

He had been an actor and a private detective. In fact, there was very little that Tony Fish did not know or could not do.

Colonel Monico, as we shall henceforth call him, placed the utmost confidence in his agent from the beginning. He told him everything about the vendetta, and the American agreed to serve him, as he was to be well paid.

Tony Fish set out to glean all the information he could respecting the Vernons.

Several days after he arrived at the Plaza to report progress.

Colonel Monico was smoking his cigar outside the hotel after breakfast when he arrived.

"Good morning, colonel," said Tony Fish, whose eyes always sparkled with vivacity.

"Good morning," replied Monico. "Have you any news?"

"Yes, sir; all I can gather, and think it will interest you," answered the secret agent.

"Let us take a walk in the park. We can talk there without any fear of being overheard."

Side by side they crossed the plaza and wandered into the park.

The information that Tony Fish had to give amounted to this:

Captain Vernon and his wife did not live happily together. He was often absent from home, being devoted to sport of all kinds, especially that of horse racing.

He was also a great card man and a gambler.

Mrs. Vernon loved her child dearly and had engaged a private tutor for him

whose name was Hicks. With her son Harry by her side she seemed to live a new life.

As they walked along the main drive the colonel was plunged in deep thought.

"I have acquainted you with the situation," said Tony Fish; "it remains for you to act."

"You know my secret," replied Colonel Monico.

"And I will keep it implicitly."

"Can I trust you further?"

"With your life."

"I am a Coriscan," continued the colonel, "and have come here to avenge my brother's wrongs. It is a vendetta, and I have three brothers who will follow it up if I fail."

"You will succeed, if I am not mistaken."

"What is your advice?"

"This," replied Fish. "I shall attack the father and mother through the son."

"That is what my brother, the Count di Capri, did."

"He was right; if aught befalls the boy a second time the mother will die of grief, and, from what I can see of Captain Vernon, he will drink himself to death."

"In that case, I shall kill the three at one blow."

"Certainly. But you'll find it difficult to get at the boy."

"Why so?" asked the colonel.

"He is guarded day and night. In the daytime his tutor, Mr. Hicks, is generally with him; if not, he is accompanied by a tall, athletic boy of about sixteen, named Tom Ludlow, who is his particular chum and lives next door to him."

"At night what precautions are taken?"

"A stalwart negro named Pompey sleeps outside his bedroom door, armed with a revolver."

The colonel reflected a moment. He was evidently developing an idea.

"I must become a friend of the family," he said.

"That is next to impossible," answered the agent.

"Why?"

"Captain and Mrs. Vernon detest foreigners."

"Indeed."

"Especially Italians."

"Ah, they have not forgotten my brother, the Count di Capri."

"What will you do with the boy if you get him away?" inquired Fish.

"I have not decided," answered the colonel.

"Shall I advise you again?"

"By all means; your brain is fertile."

"I have a friend who is the keeper of a lighthouse off the coast of Maine. If you can get the boy on board a schooner which will convey him to the Black Rock Lighthouse, my friend Grimes will settle the rest."

"Murder him, do you mean?"

"We won't quarrel about terms."

"Will he never be heard of again?"

"Never in this world."

"Are you acquainted with an owner of a schooner who would carry out our purpose?"

"I know one well."

"Can he be trusted in this delicate business?"

"Money will keep his mouth shut," rejoined Tony Fish.

"Then I will storm the stronghold."

At this juncture the two men were startled by the sound of horses galloping wildly.

This was followed by a woman's cry. They looked around.

A victoria, drawn by two handsome bays was rapidly approaching them. They had run away and the driver had been thrown from his seat.

Inside were seated a lady and a youth.

The shrill whistles of the park keepers were heard.

There was imminent danger of the carriage being smashed to pieces if a collision occurred.

If this happened the lady and the boy would be injured, perhaps fatally.

Like a knight errant of the olden times the colonel dashed forward.

Without showing a symptom of fear he stood in the middle of the road.

As the horses approached they swerved slightly. This was the colonel's opportunity. With bravery beyond praise he jumped for the nearest horse, throwing his left arm around its neck, while with his free hand he fired his revolver full at the maddened brute.

It was not his intention to kill the horse, but simply to stun it by creasing, at which he was an expert, having often performed the wonderful feat in his native land. This cuts the upper muscles of the neck, and stuns but does not kill. At the report of the pistol the horse reared and fell, bringing its mate and the vehicle to a standstill.

Mrs. Vernon had swooned away during the excitement; but even before the victoria came to a stop Harry had taken his mother in his arms and leaped to the ground. Young as he was, he was endowed with marvelous strength. His constant practice in the gymnasium had developed his muscles greatly, and made them as tough as steel.

Restoratives were quickly applied to Mrs. Vernon, and after a few minutes she was herself again.

Seeing the colonel, who luckily had not received a scratch, standing modestly near, she approached him, and, extending her hand, exclaimed:

"A thousand thanks, dear sir! How can I ever show my gratitude?"

"By saying nothing about it," replied the colonel, bowing politely.

"At least do me the favor to call upon me at my home," handing him a card.

The colonel took it, and, without glancing at it, placed it in his pocket.

By this time the horses were again upon their feet, not much the worse for their fall. They were sent home, Mrs. Vernon not caring to risk her life again behind the same team.

Another carriage was procured, and Harry and his mother drove home, again extending to the colonel a pressing invitation to call at their mansion.

Then the colonel rejoined his companion and continued his walk.

"That was pluckily and cleverly done. By Jove, I never saw anything like it. I thought you had killed the horse," remarked Tony Fish.

"It was easy enough," replied the colonel. "I was for twenty years in the cavalry service of Italy. There isn't much about horses I don't know, and I never saw the horse yet I couldn't conquer. The shooting—creasing, it is called—is the last resort to subdue a maddened brute. If properly done it only stuns. I have done it many times in the army."

"It was certainly a wonderful shot," Fish declared. "By the way, did you notice the name on the card the lady gave you?"

"I did not take the trouble to look at it," replied the colonel.

"It might be an introduction for you to good society."

"Of what use will that be to me?"



"As a key to the door of the Vernons."

"That did not strike me."

"Look at the card," persisted the agent.

Colonel Monico did so.

He started, and his face colored with excitement.

"By Jove," he exclaimed. "The very person we were speaking about, Mrs. Captain Vernon!"

The agent looked surprised. Then he burst into a laugh.

"What are you grinning at?" cried the colonel, in a snappish manner.

"It is a pity you stopped that horse," answered Tony Fish.

"So it is, when I come to think of it."

"If you had let the horses alone Mrs. Vernon and her boy might have been in eternity by this time."

"Confound the luck!"

"Ah! Ha!" laughed Tony Fish; "You have saved the cub's life when you wanted to destroy it."

The colonel stamped his foot angrily.

"Do you want to madden me?" he asked.

"By no means; only the days of chivalry are over, and there is no room for a new Don Quixote to revive them, and, if I mistake not, the Don was a Spanish fool, not an Italian one."

The blood of the di Capri rose in the colonel's veins; it mounted to his head.

He could not bear being spoken to in this flippiant manner by an inferior, whom he paid for his services.

"How dare you talk to me in that way!" he cried.

The secret agent was taken aback in alarm.

He knew the fiery nature of the Corsican he had to deal with.

Colonel Monico always carried a stiletto concealed about his person.

As we have said, they were in a very lonely portion of the park.

"I did not mean any offense," exclaimed Tony Fish.

"Beware how you insult me," replied the colonel. "Keep your place; you are my paid servant. I hire you."

In his turn Fish became nettled.

"I have a right to speak, I suppose, as well as you," he said.

"Not to me. I am your master and you my serf," hissed the colonel.

As he spoke the colonel raised his hand to give him a blow in the face.

With the dexterity of a Western man Fish pulled out his revolver.

At the same moment the Italian drew his stiletto.

Only a few feet separated them, one from another.

"Look here," said Fish, "my gun is as good as your bodkin; if you can stab I can shoot."

Colonel Monico saw the force of this remark. He smiled in a sickly manner.

For once in his life he had met his match.

"Shall we call it square?" asked the agent.

"With the greatest pleasure in the world," answered the Italian, dissembling.

"I have no hostility against you," continued Tony Fish.

"Why should you? Am I not your friend and patron?"

"Yes," said Fish, with a comical look, "but you are ugly at times."

They shook hands and replaced their weapons, and resumed their walk.

When near the Ramble a tall, well-dressed, gentlemanly looking man passed them at a rapid pace.

Soon afterward two rough-looking fel-

lows passed, as if they were following the one that had preceded them.

They had villainy plainly stamped upon their features, which were hard and weatherbeaten.

"It occurs to me," remarked the colonel, "that those men mean to rob the stranger who has gone ahead."

"That is his business, not ours," returned Tony Fish, coolly. "If we interfered on everybody's behalf we should have enough to do."

"I can't stand by and see any one maltreated. Follow me. I rely upon your help, and the stranger shall have mine."

They ran as fast as they could in the direction taken by the unknown.

All at once they heard a cry for help. Around in a corner they saw a man struggling with two assailants.

It was the tall stranger, who was being attacked by the two tramps, one of whom was armed with a small sandbag, the other with a bludgeon.

He defended himself strongly and vigorously with his fists.

Had not assistance been at hand he would have been severely injured and robbed.

At this critical moment Colonel Monico stabbed one of the ruffians in the arm with his stiletto. The other received a kick and a blow in the back from Tony Fish which sent him scampering off as fast as he could, followed quickly by his companion.

The gentleman's coat was torn, and he had received several bruises about the face and body.

Picking up his hat, he cordially thanked Colonel Monico for his timely interference.

"You have rendered me great service," he exclaimed. "I cannot stay to thank you, as I ought to do, as I am in a great hurry to keep a pressing engagement."

"My dear sir, I require no thanks," answered Monico.

"Indeed, you do, and you shall not find me ungrateful. You have risked your life for mine."

"It was nothing. I am an old soldier."

"And I, too; that is a bond of union between us."

"Esprit de corps for ever."

"Pray accept my card."

The stranger handed him a gilt-edge piece of pasteboard, bearing his name and address, and with a polite bow hastened away.

He was soon lost to sight in the intricacies of the park.

"By George," said Fish, "you are quite a hero. Where are you going to stop?"

"That is for fate to say, not I. This sort of thing is interesting to me. Your City of New York is full of adventure," replied the colonel.

"Who is your new friend?"

The colonel had put the card in his pocket without looking at it, in his customary careless manner.

When he looked at it and read the name and address he could not help smiling.

"Per Baccho!" he cried, "events multiply themselves quickly."

"How is that?" inquired Tony Fish.

"This man is no other than Captain Vernon."

"How ludicrous. You have saved the whole family, father, mother and son, from what would have been in all probability certain death."

"That is so."

"Do you not think it is about time to stay your helping hand, which you

extend so lavishly to suffering humanity."

"Quite. I shall do no more. My work would have been ended almost as soon as it began, and the vendetta fully satisfied, if I had not interfered in what did not concern me."

"It has opened the door of the house to you, however."

"That is one thing gained, I admit."

"You can pursue your plans to more advantage, because the Vernons will never dream you intend to injure them."

"The campaign shall begin to-morrow."

The colonel spoke firmly and decisively.

The blood feud was about commencing, and Harry Vernon was to be the first victim of the cruel vendetta.

## CHAPTER VI.

### HARRY IS LURED TO A LIGHTHOUSE.

Colonel Monico lost no time in visiting Captain and Mrs. Vernon at their fashionable up-town residence. He was made a friend of the house at once, and he went out driving with Mrs. Vernon and her son and accompanied the captain to his club.

He had established a claim on their gratitude, and no one had the least suspicion that he entertained any sinister design against the boy Harry.

We are wrong.

There was one exception.

This was Pompey, the big negro whom we have mentioned as his guardian at night.

He distrusted the Italian.

When quite young he had been in Naples with Mrs. Vernon, acting as a servant. His memory was very good, and he fancied he had seen the colonel somewhere.

This was not at all surprising. There was a strongly marked likeness among all the members of the di Capri family.

Mr. Hicks, the tutor, smoked the colonel's cigars, played billiards, and lunched with him, while Harry's chum, Tom Ludlow, thought him a capital fellow.

As for Harry, he took more notice of him than he did of his own father.

It had only taken six weeks for Colonel Monico to establish this amount of confidence.

Harry was allowed to walk out with him, and his friend Tom was neglected.

The colonel had played his game well, and thought the time had come for him to strike a blow.

Tony Fish had hired a schooner yacht, manned by a captain and two sailors, which was now lying off Staten Island.

One morning the colonel took Harry Vernon to the small, but well built, pleasure ship.

They had lunch on board, and took a little sail up the bay beyond the Narrows.

"How do you like the sea?" asked the colonel, as they were going home.

"Very much, indeed," replied Harry.

"Those in confinement," remarked the colonel, "experience a sense of freedom in contemplating the vast expanse of ocean."

"It is little freedom I get," observed Harry.

"Why not take a holiday with me? I am going sailing some day this week," said Monico.

"I am tired of the life I lead," replied the boy wearily.

"How is that?"

"They guard me so closely. I am



never allowed to be alone as other boys are."

"That is bad."

The colonel pretended to sympathize with him.

Harry was impulsive and easily led.

"Do not say anything about my ship and I will take you for a voyage," answered Colonel Monico.

"That would be a real pleasure. Then I must not say a word to any one about our trip."

"If you do, it will ruin all, because you will not be allowed to go."

"My mother and father, will they be pleased?" asked Harry, thoughtfully.

"You are old enough to have a little fun. When you are on board, and we are about to start, I will send your parents a telegram which will reassure their minds."

"That will do. I should not like to cause them any trouble. How long shall we be gone?"

"We will start early in the morning and return at dark."

"That will do nicely," said Harry Vernon. "My mother will go mad if I am out all night."

"What makes them guard you so closely?" asked the colonel.

"I was stolen when quite a child by some Italians who had a grudge against my father and mother, and they fear the Italians will come after me again."

"It was well to be on the safe side, but let me ask you a question: How is it they are not afraid of me? I am an Italian."

"You are so good; so generous; brave," replied the boy. "No one would be afraid of you."

The colonel smiled sardonically.

"I am glad you have such a good opinion of me," he exclaimed.

"I am sure you would not hurt a fly," continued the boy.

He was completely deceived in his false friend's character.

Before they parted at the door of his home the colonel told him to prepare himself for his trip at nine o'clock the next morning.

He was told to meet him at the corner of the street, and he was to be alone.

Everything worked well for the success of the colonel's plot.

The watchfulness of the house had been relaxed since he had been in the habit of visiting it.

Mrs. Vernon was confined to her room with an attack of influenza.

The captain was buying houses in Baltimore, and Mr. Hicks, the tutor, had gone to see some friends in Boston.

Tom Ludlow, although living next door, did not see so much of his friend Harry as usual. He had formed new acquaintances since the colonel had taken up with the boy.

Pompey, however, always faithful, remained true to his post.

In the morning after breakfast, of which he partook with his mother, Harry amused himself in a room which had been fitted up for him as a gymnasium.

It was half past eight.

At nine he had to keep his appointment with Colonel Monico.

To his annoyance Pompey came in and began to sweep and dust.

The boy was conscious that he was keeping an eye upon him.

The watching and spying to which he was constantly subjected had begun to irritate Harry.

"What do you want up here?" he asked. "Have you not something to do down stairs?"

"No, Massa Harry," replied the ne-

gro. "Me gwine to look after you to-day, as everybody else am away."

"I don't want anybody to look after me. I am old enough to take care of myself."

Pompey shook his head.

"Too many Italians about," he remarked.

Seeing that it would be difficult to get rid of Pompey, Harry determined to be artful.

"Go around to the shop on the avenue where I buy my dumbbells and other things, and bring me a heavier pair than these."

"All right, Massa Harry. You'll be a strong man some day."

The negro was completely thrown off his guard.

He did not anticipate any sharp practice on the boy's part.

When he was gone Harry smiled and rubbed his hands with glee.

"I have played 'possum with him, as he calls it," he said, "and now I will be off."

Letting himself out noiselessly at the front door, Harry walked to the corner of the street, where he found Colonel Monico waiting his arrival with a hansom, into which they both got and were driven to the South Ferry.

In due course they boarded the yacht, which was named the Seagull, and Harry was conducted below.

In the saloon stood Tony Fish, dressed in nautical costume.

"This is Mr. Fish, my captain," exclaimed the colonel.

"Sit down to lunch and excuse my absence. In a few minutes I will rejoin you."

Saying this he went on deck.

Harry and the secret agent faced one another at the table, which was spread with all the delicacies of the season.

Fully twenty minutes elapsed and the colonel did not make his appearance.

Harry had eaten sufficient and laid down his knife and fork. The time had passed rapidly, for Fish kept on talking about sea life, and the adventures he had met on board ship, for among his other accomplishments Fish was a good sailor and had visited other lands.

"I guess we won't wait for the colonel," he said. "Let us go on deck."

They did so.

To Harry's surprise the vessel was already under way.

They were passing the Narrows.

The Seagull was bounding along with a rush and a swirl before a spanking breeze. Two sailors were to be seen, one colling a rope amidship, the other standing at the wheel. Colonel Monico was nowhere to be seen.

Mainsail, topsail, and jib were set, with a couple of sky scrapers.

The man amidship advanced, touching his cap respectfully.

"The Commodore, Colonel Monico," he exclaimed, "had to go ashore in response to a telegram, and will not be able to sail to-day, though he hopes the young gentleman will enjoy himself all the same with you Captain Fish."

"Is that so?" asked the agent.

"He will meet us this evening when we go back."

"Oh, well, it doesn't matter; Master Vernon and I will contrive to get on without him."

The man touched his cap again and went on with his work.

Harry was disappointed, as he did not like to lose the society of the colonel.

At the same time he did not suspect that he was in any danger.

The sea air was invigorating, and he did not feel any weariness until they were out of sight of land, when inward qualms caused him some discomfort.

This was the harbinger and beginning of seasickness; it was his first trip on the ocean, and he had not anticipated this distressing sensation.

"I think," he said in a shaky voice, "that we had better turn back, and I should like to lie down."

"Dinner is waiting for us below," replied Tony Fish.

"Don't ask me to eat anything. I feel dreadfully sick."

"You will be better presently. This is your first voyage and you haven't found your sea legs yet."

Harry staggered and would have fallen had not Fish caught his slender form in his arms. The agent carried him below, and placed him on a berth in a state-room.

Then he went into the saloon and sat down to dinner, being waited upon by a colored man, who was both cook and steward.

"I reckon he's elected," said Fish to himself with a ludicrous grin. "He won't want to move again until we are off the coast of Maine, if he does then."

Fish was right in his conjecture.

Harry got worse instead of better. The only nourishment he could take was a little beef tea and brandy, and that did not remain long on his stomach. After twenty-four hours he became light-headed and did not know where he was.

When they arrived off the lighthouse of which Fish's friend was the keeper he was put into a boat and rowed to the Black Rock.

This jutted out into the ocean and was not visible from the land even on the clearest day.

The Rock was dark and forbidding, covered with seaweed and barnacles, and swept by the sea in stormy weather.

It had a revolving light and a storm signal bell. Its tenants were two men, both old sailors, one being named Grimes and the other Horner, the former being the master.

And they were only visited once a month by a coast guard steamer which brought them provisions and supplies.

Almost insensible, Harry was carried into the lighthouse and received by the two men, who put him on a bed of junk and old sacks.

Tony Fish did not stay long.

He spoke a few words to Grimes, gave him a sum of money and returned to the yacht.

The Seagull at once sailed back to New York.

Harry Vernon was left to recover as best he could. He had now to experience what life in a lighthouse was like.

It was his ocean prison.

Well indeed had Colonel Monico laid his plans, and thoroughly had the secret agent carried them out.

## CHAPTER VII.

### CONSTERNATION OF THE VERNONS.

On the morning of the day that saw Harry Vernon enticed away his mother was well enough to descend to the drawing room. A telegram from Captain Vernon informed him that he should be back in an hour or so.

It was about 11 o'clock when Colonel Monico rang the bell and was admitted.

As he walked across the hall to the drawing room he passed Pompey and Tom Ludlow.

These two were conversing earnestly together. Their faces wore a troubled



expression, as if something had occurred to vex and startle them.

They regarded him with suspicious glances. He knew at once that they had discovered that Harry was missing.

The colonel was ushered into Mrs. Vernon's presence, who received him with an affable smile.

"Good-morning, colonel," she exclaimed; "you are kind to come and see us so often."

"I shall be going away for a short time soon, as I have business in Washington to attend to."

"How much we shall miss your agreeable society."

"Thank you. As you are not well, I will, if you please, take Harry out for a drive. It will be the last time I shall have an opportunity of doing so. Where is he?"

"I have not seen him since breakfast," replied Mrs. Vernon.

At this moment the door opened without any announcement, and Pompey entered, followed by Tom Ludlow.

"Oh, mam," cried the negro, "some-thin' dre'ful must have happened!"

"In heaven's name, what is it?" demanded Mrs. Vernon. Her face assumed an anxious expression and her heart palpitated violently.

"Massa Harry," replied the negro, "been done gone and vanished!"

"Are you sure?"

"I leab him in the gymnasium, for he send me on an errand, an' when I come back he not dar. I search eberywhere and Massa Tom, too. We not able to find him."

Mrs. Vernon uttered a loud shriek; she rose from the sofa pale as death.

The colonel stretched out his hand to support her. As he did so Captain Vernon rushed in. He had just arrived and had learned the news of his son's disappearance from the servant.

The utmost consternation and confusion reigned in the house.

Detectives were sent for, and a search made in all directions.

But of course Harry was not to be found.

No one appeared more distressed and full of solicitude at the fate of the boy than Colonel Monico.

Mrs. Vernon was carried up stairs in violent hysterics, and a doctor sent for.

He pronounced her condition critical, and advised the greatest care, attention, and quiet.

All she could moan was the Italians had the second time robbed her of her son.

The colonel remained all day with Captain Vernon, detectives coming and going.

Captain Vernon, remembering what Harry had told him of his career, as a poor boy, secured the police to make inquiries in the Italian quarter for Corso and Paulo.

It was ascertained that some time ago they had left the city, it was supposed for New Orleans.

Suspicion, however, was attached to them in spite of their disappearance.

The Vernons were rich and the captain offered a large reward for the restoration of his son. "Unless he is found," he remarked to his false friend, "the blow will be the death of my wife, and it will take me a long time to recover the shock of his loss."

"What object can they have in injuring the boy?" asked the colonel.

"From what I have heard, they are acquainted with my old enemy, the Count di Capri."

"I read something about that in the

papers, but the Count is dead, and the object of these men would only be gain. Therefore you may hope to find your son."

"God grant it may be so," answered the Captain.

"The late Count di Capri, I believe, was an admirer of your wife. Vengeance may be at the bottom of this."

"Yes, he vowed vengeance because I married her."

"A vendetta, surely."

"Truly, he was a Corsican. Did you ever meet him?" asked Captain Vernon.

"No, but I have heard he was a gambler, and ruined himself."

"You are correctly informed. He came over here and stole my child. We recovered him by accident, and after having the pleasure of his society for a short time he is again taken from us."

The Colonel hoped he would soon have good news, and said he would call again before he left the city, after which he took his departure.

Meanwhile Pompey and Tom Ludlow had not been idle. In fact they had been indefatigable in their researches and inquiries.

At length, weary and disappointed, they sat down in the gymnasium to discuss the situation.

It was growing dark.

There was only one other occupant of the room besides themselves.

This was a large gray parrot, attached to a perch by a chain round his leg. It was a great pet of Harry's, and had been presented to him by the Colonel.

A clever bird was this; ready at picking up words and repeating them.

"What do you think of this business, Massa Tom?" asked the negro.

"I'm blest if I know what to think," replied Ludlow. "It's a queer start, any way. Harry had nothing to run away for. My mind connects the Italians with the occurrence."

"There's an Italian in it, that was suah."

Just then the parrot cried in a sharp treble:

"Poor Harry."

They both looked round.

"That's an intelligent bird," remarked Tom.

"He knows more than some humans," replied the negro.

"Say, Snowball," continued Tom, "to what Italian do you specially allude?"

The parrot again spoke:

"The Colonel! the Colonel!" he piped, Pompey sprang to his feet and scratched his head in perplexity.

"That beats the deck," he exclaimed. "Colonel Monico is the identical man I was thinking of."

"It's very comical," answered Tom Ludlow, "to say the least of it."

"And I bet my bottom dollar it's true, sah."

"That bird knows something, but he can't talk all at once. He listens and picks up words."

"That's sartin', sah," answered Pompey.

"I wish he would tell us where Harry is gone," said Tom.

They were again astonished.

The parrot seemed to know they were talking about him.

"For a sail, for a sail," exclaimed the bird.

"Who with?" asked Tom, looking up inquiringly.

"The Colonel, the Colonel," answered the bird glibly.

"This is wonderful," said Tom.

The negro sat with his mouth open, too surprised to speak.

It seemed to his superstitious mind that there was a spirit in the bird.

At last he burst out: "We's, we's on the trac, Massa Tom. That dare bird talking the trufe, by golly."

The fact is this, when Harry Vernon had been in the gymnasium that morning alone, he kept on saying aloud, in high glee, "I am going for a sail with the Colonel, hurrah?"

The bird had caught up the words.

He had learnt his lesson without any trouble.

"Say it again, Polly," exclaimed Tom, "and I'll give you a peanut."

"Going for a sail, the Colonel; hurrah;" rejoins the bird, as if he knew what was required of him.

Tom was forced to admit that the bird could not say these words without he had heard them.

There was a significant meaning in his utterances.

"Keep your mouth shut about this," he said. "I'll see into it."

"What you do, sah," asked Pompey.

"I will advertise a reward in the papers to any sailor who will give information about a boy going to sea on this day."

"Good scheme, sah; push it along."

"Trust me to do so."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A CLUE TO THE LOST BOY.

Colonel Monico was well satisfied with what had been done so far.

Tony Fish had promised that he should never hear of Harry Vernon again.

Those in the lighthouse were to dispose of the boy in a secret manner.

The nature of his untimely death would ever remain a mystery of the deep.

Not expecting to see his agent back from Maine for a few days, he visited a friend who in the Winter could always supply him with some very good duck shooting.

He enjoyed himself as much as if he had not consigned Harry Vernon to death.

When he returned to his hotel a surprise awaited him.

A letter had arrived for him from Naples, it was written by a notary public, who acted as his solicitor. In it he was informed that his three brothers had been shot while hunting brigands in Calabria. The shock of this news pained him greatly, for he was much attached to his relatives.

The whole brunt of carrying out the vendetta now lay upon his shoulders.

He had formerly thought that if anything happened to him that his brothers would send the Vernons to their doom.

But fate had decided that he should act single-handed.

He sent a messenger to the Vernons to inquire after the health of the lady.

He also asked for information respecting the boy's mother.

An answer came back from the captain to the effect that Mrs. Vernon was much worse. She was not expected to last long.

No news had been received of Harry. Captain Vernon added that he should be glad to see the colonel as he was very miserable and unnerved.

While the Italian was digesting this intelligence, Tony Fish made his appearance.

"Ah," exclaimed the colonel, "I was expecting you hourly. You have made a good passage."

"Captain," replied the agent. "So good



indeed that the youngster was taken off his feet soon after we passed the Narrows."

"Did the sailors suspect anything?"

"No. He was as limp as a bundle of rags when I landed him at the light house."

"What did you tell them?"

"That he was delicate," replied Tony Fish, "and the doctors had ordered him to stay in a light house for a month for the benefit of his health."

"What are your friends in the light house going to do with him?" continued the Colonel.

"They will put him in a sack, tie up the neck, and put him into the sea," answered the agent.

"May not the sack float like a cork on the water and be tossed ashore before any fatal harm can befall its occupant?"

"Not so. A bar of iron will be fastened around the neck of the sack."

"A dead weight," remarked Colonel Monico.

"That is it," said Fish, "those I employ are like myself."

"In what way?"

"We don't do things by halves."

"Will your men blab the secret out?" the colonel asked after a slight pause.

"Not they. There are but two of them, Grimes and Horner, and after they have killed the boy they daren't say anything about it, for their own sake."

"That is so."

There was a lull in the conversation. They were in a private apartment by themselves.

Cigars, wines, and spirits were on a buffet. Each helped himself as he pleased, while the colonel paced up and down the room smoking a cigar and cogitating.

Fish opened a window at the back of the room and looked out.

The room was on the first floor, below was a stable yard, just under the window stood a cart laden with refuse ready to be taken away.

The prospect was not inviting.

Fish, however, had an object in view. He took a small mirror from his breast pocket, held it up, and looked at it.

In it was reflected every object in the room. By its aid he could see all that passed.

Colonel Monico did not dream of this. In thought the agent was simply taking the air.

A few moments reflection convinced the colonel that Fish was of no further use to him. On the contrary he was a draw back and an incubus, now his work was done.

Tony Fish was always asking him for money in advance. He had agreed to pay him a large salary monthly, this sum Tony had anticipated six months ahead, much to the colonel's annoyance.

And he was still asking for more.

The man was a perfect vampire after money, and the colonel was afraid he would continue to be so.

He most ardently wanted to get rid of him. But how.

Colonel Monico was a man of resources.

Tony Smith was still looking out of the window, apparently, intensely interested in something that was going on in the yard.

On the sideboard two glasses of champagne had been poured out, one was for Fish, the other for the colonel.

Taking a small phial from his breast pocket, containing a colorless fluid, he

poured a few drops into the agent's glass.

These were not what are called knock-out drops, they were veritable death drops, the decoction was a quickly acting vegetable poison.

Tony Fish had evidently been expecting something of this kind.

All the time he had been looking at the small mirror he held in the palm of his hand.

Not a single movement of the Italian had escaped his notice.

When he saw the fluid poured into his glass he thought at once it was intended to poison him.

Looking out of the window was only a little bit of by-play on his part.

It was a trap in which to catch his employer. Colonel Monico took two or three steps and tapped him on the shoulder.

"Let us talk business," he said. "Captain and Mrs. Vernon remain to be dealt with before my Vendetta can be satisfied. Drink your wine," he pointed to the buffet on which the two glasses were standing.

Fish turned around with his usual look of cool complacency.

"Does it matter which glass I take?" he asked.

"I poured out this one on the left for you."

"Thank you. I prefer that on the right, the other you can drink yourself."

"Why do you talk to me like that," demanded the colonel.

"Drink!" was all that the agent gave as his answer.

Colonel Monico recoiled a step.

"Not at your dictation," he exclaimed.

"I did not expect you would," replied the agent. "I divined your purpose, and am here to baffle you!"

The Italian turned pale under his dark skin.

"What purpose?" he gasped.

"You intended to poison me! I saw you put the deadly liquid in that glass."

"You lie!" cried the colonel, hoarsely.

"Drain that glass, and I will retract what I have said."

The colonel hesitated.

"Dastard!" continued the agent. "You can't play with me. If you won't have it one way you shall have it another."

As he spoke he seized the glass and threw the contents in the colonel's face.

This was more than the fiery blood of the Italian could bear.

With a howl, like that of a wild beast, he drew his stiletto.

Tony Fish ran to the window and threw it open, his intention was to spring out into the yard.

Before he could do so the frantic descendant of the Counts di Capri was upon him.

Fish knocked up the stiletto, thus avoiding a fatal blow, but the point of the dagger ripped up a portion of his cheek to the bone.

He knew he was marked for life.

The spying detective was infuriated in his turn, and forced to retaliate.

There was no time to draw his revolver. With a dexterous movement he knocked the stiletto out of his assailant's hand. It crashed through a pane of glass and a terrible struggle ensued between the two men.

Fish was decidedly stronger than the Italian.

Getting a firm grip of his right leg and his left shoulder, Fish exerted all his strength and threw him into the yard.

"Go to the infernal regions!" he hissed, "and take my curse with you."

The colonel would undoubtedly have broken his neck or his limbs had not Providence interposed in his favor.

Luckily for him he fell on the refuse in the cart.

This broke his fall.

Climbing to the ground, he walked through the yard into the street, and disappeared.

"Sapristi!" he muttered enigmatically. "The spy does not know, but he will find out soon."

As a matter of fact, Tony did not know the fate that was in store for him.

He was highly indignant at the way in which he had been treated by one whom he had served well.

Watching the colonel vanish into the street, he took a look at himself in a pier glass.

There was not much blood issuing from the gash made in his face by the stiletto.

Still it was an ugly wound, which would leave a life long scare.

Reviling the colonel for his treachery, he went to a doctor, who put two or three stitches in the cheek and some plaster over that.

He advised him to attend to it, and also to be temperate, and he would be all right in a few days.

Tony Fish was not at all alarmed, but he determined to be revenged on the colonel, from whom he did not expect to be able to extort any more money.

To do this effectually he resolved to put Captain and Mrs. Vernon on their guard against him. An anonymous letter would do this.

He need not inculpate himself.

It would be too late to save the boy, but he could certainly enable Captain and Mrs. Vernon to protect themselves against the far-reaching Italian vendetta.

Partaking of a light supper he returned to his lodging and went to bed.

He awoke in the night, conscious of an uncomfortable feeling, not only about his face and neck, but over his whole body.

What could it be.

He had never experienced anything like it before. The sensation was awful.

He endeavored to move, but a cold rigidity had set into his limbs, as if he were dying.

The agent was frightfully alarmed. He could not reach the bell to summon assistance.

He shouted for help until he was hoarse. At last a light sleeper in the house was awakened.

Through him a servant was aroused, and sent for medical assistance.

When the doctor arrived he at once examined the patient, and to the surprise of Fish asked him if he had been bitten by a snake.

The agent replied in the negative.

In his turn he inquired why such a question should be put to him.

"You have all the symptoms of being inoculated with the virus of a venomous reptile. It grieves me to say that I can do nothing for you."

"Is there no antidote?"

"None whatever."

"How long have I to live?"

"You may last two hours, you may last four, but certainly not more than that," replied the doctor.

This was, indeed, a deathblow to Fish.

The doctor gave him a stimulant, and left him in charge of two attendants.



Crazy with fright, and maddened with pain, the agent tried to collect his thoughts.

It was with difficulty he did so.

He had heard of poisoned daggers.

Though he had no proof to that effect, he was convinced that Colonel Monico's stiletto was tipped with venom.

His last hour was rapidly approaching.

Beckoning to one of the attendants, he requested him to summon Captain Vernon to his bedside.

His voice had sunk to a hoarse whisper. It was with difficulty he could make himself understood.

It was his dying wish to reveal to him the murderous hostility of the Italian.

At the same time he intended to tell him about the stiletto wound, and ask him to have the colonel arrested and brought to justice.

The minutes flew by with startling rapidity. Eternity was staring him in the face.

He endeavored to speak, but his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth.

He made signs to the remaining attendant to bring him a pencil and a piece of paper. His fingers, which were icy cold, closed upon the pencil, but he was unable to move his wrist, with the utmost difficulty he scribbled in straggling letters one word:

"Beware!"

Then a sudden spasm convulsed his frame, the death rattle was heard in his throat, his eyes rolled fearfully, and in a few moments his heart ceased to beat.

Tony Fish, the smart detective, secret agent, courier, and spy, was dead.

He had been cut off without any warning. Alas! for those chiefly concerned, his dread secret had died with him.

Scarcely had the last breath passed away from his body when Captain Vernon was ushered into the room. It will be remembered they had never met, therefore Tony Fish was a perfect stranger to the captain.

"I do not know this man," he exclaimed. The dead man's face was black and swollen, making him a hideous sight.

Vernon turned away in disgust, thoroughly nauseated.

"He wished to warn you against something or somebody, sir," said the man who had been at the bedside.

He showed him the paper with the word "Beware!" scrawled upon it.

Captain Vernon could neither make head nor tail of this.

He quitted the house as wise as when he entered it, and went to his home.

Not a word had been uttered by Tony Fish to incriminate Colonel Monico.

The cause of the agent's death remained a mystery to all who knew him.

When Captain Vernon arrived he was met by Tom Ludlow and Pompey.

"Any news?" asked Tom.

"Unfortunately none. I had my journey for nothing," replied the captain.

Tom had almost begun to despair in getting an answer to his advertisement, which appeared in all the morning papers for some time past.

He and Pompey went in to the gymnasium, which was their favorite lounging place when they wanted to converse.

"I am afraid we shall have to give Massa Harry up as dead and gone," remarked Pompey.

"Yes, I am afraid the poor fellow has been taken away from us forever," replied Tom.

"It's all through the Italian, and I know it.

"Perhaps you are right; I won't argue the point. It is not worth while to contradict you."

"I'se sartin suah, sah," persisted the negro. A servant looked in at the door and announced that a man who looked like a seafarer wished to see Mr. Ludlow.

"Ask him to come in," exclaimed Tom. "I did," was the answer, "but he won't leave the doorstep."

The reward Tom had offered for information about Harry Vernon was twenty-five dollars. This amount he had in his pocket.

Going to the door he saw a sailor, who asked for a description of the boy advertised for. Tom promptly gave him an accurate one.

"That's the lad," cried the sailor, "hand over the dollars and I will tell you where to find him."

Tom Ludlow did not hesitate to do so. "Where is he?" asked Tom.

"In the Black Rock Lighthouse off the coast of Maine!"

After uttering these words, the sailor was off like a shot.

It was one of the crew of the Seagull who had spoken and given the wished-for clue.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THROWN INTO THE SEA.

Harry Vernon had been a day and a night in the Black Rock Lighthouse. The rest and nourishment given him improved his condition. A fierce storm of wind and rain was raging. The sea dashed in huge waves over the Black Rock and the massive stones of which the lighthouse was composed, but no amount of rough weather had ever affected it.

On the evening of the second day after Harry had been left at the Black Rock by the unfortunate and unscrupulous Tony Fish, the keepers of the lighthouse, Grimes and Horner, were seated in a cozy room on the second tier of the lighthouse.

A comforting fire was burning in the stove, and they were well supplied with tobacco and liquid refreshments.

The wind howled and shrieked outside, and the enormous Atlantic breakers dashed against the stones with a deafening roar. The men had to speak loud to make themselves heard.

Rough-looking men were these two, with long gray hair and beards, beetle brows and wrinkled faces.

Grimes looked more ferocious than his companion, and anybody could read his character in his countenance.

"There will be some wrecks to-night," exclaimed Horner. "I have not lighted the lamps yet, and it is too much trouble to keep the bell ringing."

"We are playing into the hands of the wreckers all the time," replied Grimes, "and I am tired of it, because we don't get our proper share of the plunder from our old-time friends, Lurem and Bythall."

The men he alluded to were supposed to be simple fishermen, living in a very small, obscure village on the coast of Maine.

"Why don't you give it up and go on the mainland," asked Horner.

"I am so used to this kind of life that I could not do it," replied Grimes. "I love the splash of the waves and the screech of the wind."

"You have saved money; I know you have got a lot in that box of yours."

"What has that got to do with you?" demanded Grimes, fiercely. "Do you want to rob and murder me?"

"That is more in your line than mine," answered Horner. "How about that boy on the gunny sacks below?"

"That is my business. When the wind drops I shall tie him up in a sack with a lump of lead at his feet and throw him into the sea."

"You won't do that unless I am paid for looking on," said Horner with determination in his eye.

Grimes placed a hand on a knife in his belt. "You are my servant here," he exclaimed, "and I will not give you a red cent for extra work."

"I shall stop you."

"Try it on."

"Injure that boy and I will appeal to the police for your arrest."

Grimes indulged in a hoarse laugh.

"You think you will, do you?" he asked.

"I mean to, as sure as I am sitting here."

"You poor fool."

"I will not have the boy injured."

"Faint-hearted idiot!"

"Call me what you like; you will have to pay me or set him free."

"I will act squarely with both of you," Grimes continued, "and in this way: you shall go into the sea before him."

"Who will put me there?"

"I will," replied Grimes. "I can tackle half a dozen like you single-handed."

As he spoke he flashed his knife before him in the lamplight.

Horner shrank back in terror.

He was not prepared for this act of hostility on the part of his companion.

They had often had hard words, but they had never yet come to blows.

"Don't carry on too far with me," cried Grimes.

"What's the kid to you?"

"I am not asking for a quarrel," answered Horner, "but the youngster was sick when he was brought here, and I have been attending to him all the time because you were too drunk to move out of your bed, and I have taken a fancy to the lad."

"Hang your fancy," shouted Grimes, "if you harp out that string I will cut your throat."

"Are you going to pay me to keep my mouth shut and my eyes closed?" asked Horner.

"No," replied Grimes emphatically. "I have had you here in this lighthouse as my assistant going on five years, and if I have made money out of the wreckers you have always had a bit of it."

The altercation between the two men continued. Grimes was in the habit of smoking opium. He put some of this pernicious drug in his pipe. It speedily took effect upon him. Becoming drowsy, he glared at Horner.

Suddenly he sprang up, and seizing a bar of iron rushed toward Horner.

Standing over him he trembled with rage.

"Speak another word to me," he yelled, "and I will brain you where you sit."

Horner was thoroughly alarmed. He knew the violence of which his companion was capable.

To save his life he altered his tone.

"Don't find fault with me," he exclaimed, "I will not vex you."

He held up his hands to avert a blow.

"I am in no mood to be thwarted," replied Grimes.

"What do you want me to do?"

"Attend to my wishes."

"I will do so. Name them," said Horner.

Giving a grunt of satisfaction, Grimes returned to his seat.

He was very far from under the influence of opium.



But scratching his head he endeavored to collect his senses.

"How about the boy?" he asked.

"Oh! Let him slide. Who cares about him!" replied Horner in an assumed, careless air.

All the same he was only acting. In his heart he retained the same sympathy for hapless Harry Vernon.

"Bring the lad up," continued Grimes.

"It is just the kind of a night to commit a deed like this."

Horner departed.

He was some time gone. At length he reappeared, carrying a sack with a shot in it slung over his shoulder, and leading Harry by the hand.

The latter looked pale and ill, as well as the night.

He bore himself bravely.

Had Horner been buoying him up with hope? Perhaps so!

"Ha!" cried Grimes, with the fierceness of an ogre. "Pack him up and throw him out of the window."

Grimes watched the performance with eagerness, but he could not see plainly. All was blurred and imperfect to his vision. Horner bundled Harry into the sack, which he tied around the neck with a rope.

It was about six feet in length. The other end was fastened to an iron ring in the wall.

When put out of the window Harry would by its aid be suspended in the air. Horner unfastened the round plate-glass window.

It opened inwards.

Wind drove in a quantity of spray. All at once the deep boom of a gun was heard.

It had a fateful significance.

This was the minute gun at sea—always a signal of dire distress with mariners.

"Boom! Boom! Boom!" It sounded like the knell of death in the ears of Harry.

But he did not utter a cry.

He was game to the last.

Pushing him through the embrasure cut in the stone, Horner allowed him to drop apparently into the sea.

It was all over in a moment.

The window was shut and the sullen boom of the minute gun died away.

This made sweet music to Grimes's ears. He knew that some big ship was being lured to the shore.

She would soon become the prey of the wreckers.

"He will be food for fishes," remarked Grimes. "Good-night, I'm going in for a long sleep."

"It's what you need," replied Horner.

"See to things generally."

"Trust me. I will not fail you."

The senior lighthouse keeper sank into a profound slumber.

It promised to last at least twenty-four hours.

The man was saturated with opium, nicotine, and alcohol.

Horner satisfied himself that he slept and went below.

He had work to do down stairs.

## CHAPTER X.

### AMONG THE WRECKERS.

Horner descended the spiral staircase leading to a warehouse below, a powerful lantern flashed a light on the stone steps.

When he got half-way down he opened an iron door in the wall. A gust of wind and the splash of a wave nearly took his breath away.

By the aid of his lantern he saw the

sack he had lowered dangling in front of him.

It was swaying backward and forward with the breeze.

In it was the body of the boy, which now and then dangerously knocked against the stones.

Drawing the sack toward him he closed the iron door and dragged the boy into a lower compartment of the lighthouse.

In his position of safety it was sport to him to listen to the roar of the wind and waves.

With Harry Vernon it was very different. When released from his sack and placed upon the rough bed he was senseless, his lips livid, and his face bloodless.

Horner gave him a stimulant, and sat down on an empty box to await his return to consciousness.

The compartment in which they were was the largest in the building, as the tower narrowed up to the top, in the pinnacle of which was the incandescent arc, which that night had not been lighted.

All around Horner were cases and boxes of supplies, some full, some empty, and alongside of him was a large boat standing on a wheeled carriage so that it could be moved through the entrance to the lighthouse down an incline on the rock, and so into the sea when the keepers wanted to go out.

It had a sail and could easily be managed by one man.

A feeling of dismay came over Horner. He feared that the heir to the Vernons was dead.

Harry had told him who he was, and all that had happened to him, promising him a large reward from his father if he could enable him to escape and get back home again.

A large black cat, the only companion of the lighthouse men's solitude, had followed Horner down stairs, and, jumping on his knee, began to purr good-temperedly.

The man stroked it, considering it a sign of good luck.

His superstition was not without foundation.

Harry Vernon opened his eyes, and a faint smile came to his lips as he saw his friend.

"Good!" exclaimed Horner. "He will live, and we shall fly the coop before that vicious old rascal Grimes wakes up."

He assisted Harry to rise, and made him sit up on the side of the bed.

"It is all right, Master Harry," he said. "I have got the old man fast asleep upstairs, and as soon as day breaks we will shove the boat out and make for the mainland."

Harry looked up in a dazed manner. He did not seem to fully comprehend all that had happened.

"Where have I been?" he asked. "You told me you would not hurt me, but after you put me in the sack all became a blank."

Horner lighted his pipe and gave him an explanation.

At this moment a tremendous crash of thunder was heard outside and echoed through the chamber of the lighthouse.

Soundly as Grimes was sleeping it roused him, and terribly alarmed, he ran to the top of the stairs, being only half awake.

"What's the matter?" he shouted. "I guess we are struck by lightning."

Horner was alarmed. "Hold on!" he replied. "It's all right. I am coming."

He did not want Grimes to see Harry. In his mad frenzy the ruffian might have killed him.

But Grimes was not to be checked. He descended the stairs in order to find out if any damage had been done.

Within half a dozen steps of the bottom of the flight he stopped short, trembling.

A ghastly expression came over his countenance.

His eyes rolled in frenzy.

Raising his hands over his head he uttered a shout like that of a maniac.

"Oh God!" he shrieked. "The boy! The boy! It is a ghost! I am doomed!"

Unable to restrain himself, he fell forward, striking his head on the concrete floor, thereby fracturing his skull.

Blood flowed profusely from the wound.

Horner did what he could to stop the hemorrhage, but without success.

As fast as he put on bandages Grimes frantically tore them away.

His ravings, curses, and imprecations were terrible to listen to.

Ere the gray dawn broke in the east he had passed away.

Horner covered over the cold clay and looked out.

The storm was over and the violence of the waves had subsided to a great extent.

The sea was calm enough to lower the boat, and he proceeded to do so.

Harry Vernon assisted him to the best of his ability.

When they were on board, Horner hoisted the sail and steered for the shore.

Harry sat down in the stern sheets very quiet, but extremely thankful for his narrow escape.

Horner uttered an exclamation of impatience, reasons for which he did not explain to his companion.

He had forgotten to take with him Grimes's money box, and, as the wind and tide were against him, he could not return for it.

When the boat neared the shore, which was low lying and sandy, they discovered the wreck of a large yacht, evidently from its size the property of a rich gentleman.

This was probably the vessel that had fired the shots during the night.

Between two hills of sand, driven up by the waves, was erected a circular tent, around which were groups of several fishermen. Others were engaged in taking what valuables they could find out of the ship.

These were the wreckers.

Their village was dimly visible about a mile and a half distant.

Their approach was quickly recognized by the wreckers, and Lurem, who was a tall, dark-bearded man, walked rapidly down to the beach to meet them. He knew the rig of the lighthouse boat, and he was familiar with the form of Horner.

Running the boat aground, the lighthouse man and Harry Vernon stepped ashore.

Lurem inquired the reasons of their coming to that spot.

Horner had already made up his story, and replied that Harry Vernon had fallen overboard from a passing ship, and, being a good swimmer, had kept afloat, and finally drifted on to the Black Rock, where he was rescued.

Grimes had fallen down stairs and had broken his skull.

He had come on shore to inform the Lighthouse Board and sent Harry to his home in New York.

In return for this communication Lurem told the lighthouse man that the shipwrecked vessel belonged to a New York gentleman, who was paying them



a handsome sum for salvage, and they were getting all that was valuable out of the ship before she went to pieces on the next flood tide.

Lurem invited them to come to the tent, where they could rest and have refreshments.

Harry went on at once, as he was tired and weak, leaving the wrecker and Horner together.

"I think I will go over to the lighthouse and bring the body of Grimes, as it does not seem right to leave it there," exclaimed Lurem.

"If you go I will go with you," answered Horner.

"I don't want any company."

"You've got to have mine, for I know what you are after."

"What is that?"

"The old man's money box. I forgot to take it with me, and I am going back for it, anyway. I intend to have my share of it, come what may."

"If you insist, come along."

Lurem was obliged to give in, and the two men, entering the boat, set sail for the lighthouse.

Harry felt rather nervous as he approached the tent, for the aspect of the wreckers was wild and fierce.

Several of them were sitting on boxes and barrels, which they had brought from the wreck.

There were plenty of wines and other liquors, which they had broached, and several of them were intoxicated.

Some of the men were singing snatches of songs, regardless of a melancholy spectacle not far from them.

The captain and crew, consisting of four men, had been drowned, their corpses had been drawn up on the shore and laid on their backs side by side.

As we have said, only the owner of the yacht had been saved.

Little did he think that the men by whom he was surrounded were thieves and villains.

It did not enter his mind that it was through them that the lighthouse lamp was extinguished.

Otherwise he would have been warned of his dangerous nearness to the coast.

The wreckers, about thirty in number, did not attempt to interfere with Harry, whom they had seen speaking to their leader, Lurem.

Nodding pleasantly to the men, Harry walked into the tent, where he had been told refreshments were spread.

By this time the white sail of the lighthouse boat, in which were seated Horner and Lurem, was being lost to sight in the distance.

It was a remarkably fine day; the air was clear, and the lighthouse could be just discerned on the verge of the horizon.

In the tent were seated two men before a table well spread with edibles and potables. One was Bythall, whom Harry Vernon did not know, but the other was one, to his utter surprise, he did know. This was no other than Colonel Monico.

Harry stopped short, bewildered.

He then ran forward, glad to greet, as he thought, an old friend.

Not the slightest suspicion did he have that the apparently amiable Italian was the cause of all his trouble.

The colonel recognized him in an instant, and was as much surprised in the meeting as was the boy.

After the death of Tony Fish from the scratch of his poisoned dagger the colonel felt uneasy in his mind about Harry Vernon, and determined to visit the Black Rock lighthouse to see if the deadly work had been done.

He had been assured that Harry Vernon was no more.

Embarking in his yacht, he had sailed for the coast of Maine, where he was caught in the storm the previous night. In vain he had fired signals of distress; the relentless waves and the driving wind had sent him ashore, and, with the amount of luck he did not deserve, he had escaped a watery grave.

For him to see Harry Vernon walk into the tent was an amazement.

Extending his hand, he grasped that of Harry in a most cordial manner.

"My dear boy," he exclaimed, "How did you come here? Sit down, you must tell me all about it. I unfortunately have been wrecked while taking a cruise, but, thank God, I am alive and well, and perfectly safe in the hands of these good people."

He led Harry to a chair and pressed him to eat.

Harry was really hungry, and had his teeth, as they say, sharp set.

While regaling himself he related all that had happened to him, from the time the yacht had left New York till he was thrown into the sea by order of Grimes and rescued by Horner.

The colonel laid the whole of the blame upon Tony Fish, whose motive, however, he did not attempt to explain.

"No doubt, my dear boy," he exclaimed, "you have an enemy, and a bitter one somewhere. I am your friend, and will protect you."

Harry reflected for a moment.

He was a smart boy.

For various reasons he began to suspect the sincerity of Colonel Monico.

There were discrepancies that had to be sifted.

"Why did you not inquire of Mr. Fish what had become of me when you placed me in his care?"

"Fish told me that he had left you in the lighthouse, as you were very ill, and as soon as possible I started out to find you. It is evident that you have been the victim of Grimes, who is evidently a drunken maniac, and not responsible for his actions."

Harry affected to believe this, but he had an undercurrent of thought.

"I will not trust this man any longer," he said to himself. "There is something wrong, and I know it. I will get away from here and trust to a stranger rather than a false friend."

The boy was right, though he acted on impulse.

He rose from the table.

It was his resolve to tramp to the nearest town.

"Where are you going?" demanded Monico.

"On my way," replied Harry. "I thank you for your kindness. Good-by."

"You will stay here."

"Not if I know it. This is a free country, and there is no compulsion. I am my own master, if I am but a boy."

Monico seized him by the arm and threw him on the ground.

"What do you mean by this outrage?" cried Harry, who was shaken, but not hurt.

"I am acting as your friend, and going to take you home," answered the colonel.

"I mistrust and will have nothing to do with you."

"We will see about that."

The colonel as he spoke made a sign to Bythall.

"Seize that boy and bind him for me," he exclaimed. "He wants to run away. I know his parents and mean to restore him to them."

"Ay, ay, sir" responded Bythall.

The wrecker took up a coil of rope, and before Harry could rise he securely bound his arms behind his back.

"Where could you put him out of the way for a time?" asked Monico.

"There is the hull of an old wreck just behind the tent," replied Bythall.

"That will do. I will wait here until you come back. By no means allow him to escape."

"Trust me."

Colonel Monico sank back into his chair and continued to smoke his cigar with perfect complacency.

The wrecker led Harry Vernon out of the tent to the rear of a sandhill.

Near by was the hull mentioned. It was firmly embedded in the sand, and had been fitted with a door, which gave admittance to what was in reality a storehouse.

Here the wreckers kept various stores of goods and provisions, and they used it when they were not engaged in fishing or wrecking for card gambling and drinking purposes.

When Bythall had got Harry inside he pushed him into a corner, saying: "You will have to stop here until the boss decides what to do with you."

"I'll make you and him pay for what you are doing to me now," replied Harry.

"I see now the real character of the man who has pretended to be my friend."

"Ha! Ha!" laughed Bythall, "that has nothing to do with me."

"Perhaps you will find out in the long run that it has."

"Hold your jaw or I will crack it for you," said the ruffian.

"There is law in the land, beware!"

Scarcely were the words out of Harry's mouth when the wrecker gave him a brutal kick.

Harry could utter no remonstrance or complaint.

For a moment he thought his jaw was broken.

Bythall walked away, grinning sardonically, and locked the door behind him.

It was not long before he was again beside the Italian.

The last of the race of the Counts di Capri was jubilant with smiles.

Though his last shot had failed to hit the mark, Harry was in his power again. This was a veritable triumph, and he intended to enjoy it.

He had thrown off the mask and could not possibly retreat.

"Is the boy secure?" he asked.

"Yes," replied the wrecker. "He is in a death trap, where his bones may moulder for many a day if you wish it so."

"No, no," said the colonel, hastily, "that mode of procedure is too slow."

"Do you want quick action?"

"Most decidedly."

Bythall was plunged into deep thought for half a minute.

"What will you give me to get rid of him?" he inquired.

"Name your price."

"One hundred dollars will buy me."

"It shall be yours, my friend. What will you do?"

Bythall lowered his head to the level of the Italian's ear. He spoke in a hoarse whisper.

"The hull is old, it is all wood, and has been tarred half a dozen times, and will burn like tinder!"

"I grasp your meaning."

"Do you see?" continued Bythall, with an animated look. "I will set fire to it in the night and burn him to a cinder."

The colonel nodded approvingly.



"That will do," he said, "the money is yours."

He sank back again in his chair and continued smoking.

Just then an altercation arose outside and Bythall went out to ascertain the cause.

It was only a fight between two men. Bythall seeing there was nothing more to be done in clearing the wreck sent all the men to their homes in the village, giving each man a handsome sum provided by the colonel as a reward for the work they had done.

**The coast was soon cleared.**

He, however, remained behind.

There was work to be done.

Harry Vernon had to be disposed of in the way proposed, and it was necessary for Bythall to await the return of Lurem and Horner from the lighthouse.

#### CHAPTER XI.

##### SURPRISE AT THE LIGHTHOUSE.

It was about midday when Lurem and Horner reached the Black Rock. Lowering the sail they secured the boat and entered the building.

The body of Grimes was lying where Horner and Harry Vernon had left it. By this time it was cold and rigid.

Leaving him they ascended to the second chamber, where they found a large wooden chest, which stood behind the door. It was clasped with iron and padlocked.

"There it is," said Horner.

"So I perceive," replied Lurem. "How much do you think he has got in it?"

"That's more than I can tell you. He has saved a good bit, however."

"Where is the key?"

"I never knew where the old rascal hid it," replied Horner.

"Did he keep it in his clothes?" asked Lurem.

"No, he was too artful for that."

"Then I guess we will break it open."

He spied a ponderous axe, which he seized and attacked the chest with. It speedily yielded with his blows, the lid was knocked off, and the contents revealed.

These consisted of a great deal of silver and paper money, done up in packets, the amount of each packet being written on a piece of paper attached to it.

Lurem eagerly reckoned up the total, which came to three thousand dollars.

"It is as much as I expected," remarked Horner. "Half and half. Share and share alike."

"All or none," cried Lurem, brandishing the axe.

"That is not fair."

"I don't care; stand aside."

"I never ran yet, and I am not going to begin now."

Saying this Horner drew a knife.

A desperate affray seemed imminent. It began by Lurem aiming a blow at Horner with the axe.

This he stepped aside to avoid, but slipping on some greasy substance he fell on his knees. This was Lurem's opportunity.

He did not miss it.

Dealing an awful blow at his adversary, he nearly severed his head from his body. Horner fell forward, his head and neck hanging over the money chest.

The blood spurted out in a perfect torrent, running into the box.

Before Lurem could pull him back the chest was flooded.

As a natural consequence, the dollar bills were dyed with his blood.

This would render it dangerous if not impossible to change them anywhere.

With a howl of baffled rage, Lurem spurned the dead man's body with his foot and cursed him.

The money for which he had committed murder was of no use to him now. To avert suspicion from himself he dragged Grimes's body up stairs and placed it near that of Horner, so that the lighthouse officials when they came would think they had been fighting over the money and had killed one another.

He was about to descend in order to return to the land, full of rage at his bad luck, when a cheery voice from below shouted: "Ahoy, up there, ahoy!"

He had left the door open leading to the Rock.

Some one had arrived unexpectedly, and he was placed in an uncomfortable position.

He hesitated for a moment.

He listened, and again the voice was heard.

"Is there anything at home here?"

"Coming," he answered at length.

Going down the stairs, he saw a young man and a negro. They had rowed to the Rock in a boat which had put off from a small steamer lying to a couple of hundred yards off.

It was Tom Ludlow, accompanied by Pompey.

They had lost no time in coming to the Black Rock Lighthouse to rescue Harry Vernon.

"Are you the young man in charge of this tower?" asked Tom.

"No, sir," answered Lurem.

"I am a fisherman living on the mainland opposite, being a friend of the keepers, Grimes and Horner. I often come over to see them, and sell them such things as butter, eggs, and poultry."

"Any one else here?"

"Not a soul."

"I must make sure of that by searching the house, for I expect that a boy is being hidden away here."

"You are welcome to search as far as I am concerned, though you will see a terrible sight up stairs. The two keepers have had a fight, and killed one another. I was horrified when I found it out."

"It is a fitting place for a tragedy," remarked Ludlow. "Any way, we will search."

Lurem held up his hand. "Stay," he exclaimed, "You spoke of a boy."

"Yes, have you seen one?" asked Ludlow.

Lurem stated that early in the morning Horner had come to the shore and landed a youth, whom he described, and said that he would be very likely found in the tent near the spot where a gentleman's yacht was wrecked.

Ludlow and Pompey thanked him for the information, but all the same searched the building from top to bottom, being greatly shocked at the sight of the corpses, and, finding no trace of Harry, they returned to their steamer, which was soon seen heading for the land.

Lurem followed a little while afterward, stopping to take the silver from the money chest, and hide it in the locker of his boat.

Tom Ludlow and Pompey were fairly on the track.

Would the wily Italian baffle them again?

#### CHAPTER XII.

##### SAVED FROM A BURNING WRECK.

Colonel Monico sat in the wreckers' tent, plunged in deep thought.

His face wore an expression of triumph. This time he fancied that Harry Vernon was thoroughly in his power.

If he perished in the burning of the old hull, who could accuse him of the deed?

Bythall had lighted a fire not far off with old boxes and portions of the wreckage of the yacht. A spark might be easily blown on the old hull and set it on fire.

Near by on the shore stood Bythall watching the little steamer containing Tom Ludlow and the faithful Pompey, and a small boat which Lurem was sailing from the lighthouse.

Gradually the boat approached the shore, and soon was beached.

Bythall stepped forward, and, noticing the small sacks in which Lurem had stored Grimes's silver, asked:

"What have you got in those bags?"

"Money! Silver!" was the laconic reply.

"Money! Where did you get it from?"

"I have a frightful story to tell you," replied Lurem, inventing a plausible lie.

"When I was at the lighthouse Horner and Grimes fell to fighting, and it was a fight to the death. Grimes was counting his money, when Horner stepped up and said it was nearly time he got his share of it. Grimes refused to divide, and in the fight that followed Grimes got a fractured skull, while Horner had his head nearly chopped off."

Bythall shrank back in horror at this recital.

"This beats anything I ever heard of," he exclaimed. "But why didn't you bring the rest of the money? I know he had more. I know his money was not all in silver."

"Horner fell over the box in which Grimes kept his money, and the blood from his wounds saturated the bills so that they were useless to me."

"Did you leave the bodies at the lighthouse?"

"What else could I do?" answered Lurem. "I shall notify the Lighthouse Board. They will see to them."

"It is too bad. They were good friends of ours, and in their day did us many a good turn."

"Well, they are gone, now, and that is the end of them. But, Bythall, what has become of that boy Horner landed?"

Bythall looked at him curiously.

"I can enlighten you, and open your eyes a bit," he said. "Since you went to the lighthouse several things have happened. The Italian who owns the yacht we lured on shore knows that boy, hates him like poison, and wants him put out of the way."

"Oh, ho! I begin to see. But that's a dangerous game."

"Not the way I intend to do it. I have him shut up in the old hulk which we use as a storehouse. When it gets dark I will set it on fire. That will end his career."

"I should say it will. Is he going to pay well for the job? The storehouse is worth something."

"Only a hundred to begin with. But let me alone. I'll bleed him after the thing is done for all he's worth. But, hush, here comes the colonel."

They both became instantly silent.

"Give me the keys of the old store-room," said the colonel, addressing Bythall. "I want to see if the boy is safe."

"You needn't fear on that score. He's safe enough. If you want to make sure, here is the key. Go and look for yourself."

The colonel took it and strode toward the old hulk, which was but a short distance away. Arriving there, he opened the door and entered.

The colonel had not noticed that the



wind had shifted and was blowing sparks and flames toward the old hulk, nor did he notice that he was being followed by two persons, no other than Tom Ludlow and Pompey, who had landed from their little steamer, and, seeing the colonel, had followed as close as they dared.

On entering the colonel relocked the door, and turning was surprised to see Harry Vernon standing there, bold and defiant. He had succeeded in freeing himself from the bonds which Bythall had placed upon his hands and feet.

In his excitement the colonel dropped the key to the floor. For the moment he did not attach much importance to the loss, thinking he could find it whenever he wanted it.

"So, my boy, you know me, do you?" he hissed, every feature and motion depicting anger and revenge.

"Yes," replied Harry, "to my sorrow. I know you as a villain and a scoundrel. One that has caused my mother untold suffering. What has she ever done that you should cause her such pain? What have I done that you should desire my death, as I really believe you do?"

"You shall know. The telling is one of the sweetest morsels of my revenge," exclaimed Colonel Monico, with evident delight. "My brother, the Count di Capri, loved your mother. She refused him and married your father, Captain Vernon. That was the cause of his ruin and death. My brother swore a vendetta, which is an oath of vengeance, and binding on every member of our family. My brother stole you from your parents. It was his intention to bring you up among the low classes, make a criminal of you, and on your conviction for a crime reveal your identity to your parents. Ha! That would have been sweet revenge!"

"I was to be the victim for no fault of my own. I never harmed your brother in any manner," said Harry coolly.

"That makes no difference. It is revenge we want, and the family of Count di Capri will have it."

During the exciting conversation they had not noticed that the old hulk was gradually filling with smoke. That it must be on fire. The smoke brought them both to their senses.

Both realized the situation in an instant.

"The key! The key!" cried Colonel Monico, in vain endeavoring to recover it, crawling on his hands and knees and searching in every corner.

Harry stood dumfounded. He did not know what to do.

"God help me!" he gasped.

Bang! Bang!

What was that? It came again. It sounded like the blows from an axe. Some one must be battering at the door. Fast and furious came the blows.

"Help! Help!" shouted Harry as loud as he could.

"Coming, boy!" said a voice, which Harry instantly recognized as that of Tom Ludlow.

Just then a large beam fell, striking the still groping Count on the head, knocking him senseless. Then the door burst open, falling inward with a crash, and Harry darted forward, panting for breath, only to fall into the strong arms of his faithful servant, Pompey. He was quickly carried out of reach of smoke and flames, restoratives were applied, his face was bathed, and in a few moments he recovered sufficiently to shout:

"The colonel! He's in there!" pointing to the now fiercely burning hulk.

But it was too late to save the colonel.

The fire was by this time beyond control. The vindictive Italian had met the fate he had designed for another.

The night was passed aboard the steamer. In the morning they sailed back to New York, where Harry was received by his father and mother with open arms.

Never again was he molested by any one. The vendetta was ended.

The villains, Lurem an Bythall, did not long continue their nefarious occupation. They were hunted down by the authorities and sent to long terms in prison.

Harry Vernon never forgot the kindness of Tom Ludlow and Pompey. To the former he gave a handsome present as a remembrance, to the latter a sum of money which made his eyes bulge with astonishment.

THE END.

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